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A STUDY OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:
WING SQUADRON OFFICER COURSE

by

Kerk B. Brown, Major, USA

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Advisor: Lieutenant Colonel Gregory D. Herbert

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

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Preface

This project grew from many loves: my West Point inspired study of leadership, my love of organizational training and development, and as a dedication to my father, Kelly B. Brown, Sr.—a career airman. There is a much-studied debate amongst leadership theorists: is leadership an art or a science? That is to say: are leaders born or made? We’ve heard of and perhaps even commented that someone is a natural leader, but less rarely have we uttered the expression that someone has developed into a leader. The purpose of the United States military’s Continuum of Professional Military Education is to develop leaders of the future by continually providing them the tools to fight and win in an uncertain environment.

The inception of this study was a recognition of a disconnect by the leadership of the United States Air Force within their educational continuum and its potentially detrimental effects for the future of its force unless redressed. I believe using my experiences and my Army perspective of the Air Force both as a student within its professional military education system and as an outside military observer looking within, I have helped the United States Air Force meet its challenge.

I would like to thank a variety of people who had input into this project. My spouse-Heather, whose love and support makes the military all worthwhile and provides me with the strength to succeed during this year of academic separation. My seminar mates, Seminar 14 Mix 1-“Fightin’ Fuchsia” and Seminar 17 Mix 2, whose encouragement,

ideas, and support were key to my success and maintenance of sanity. My research advisors, Lt Col Gregory D. Herbert, ACSC DLC, and Dr. John Tarver, Troy State University Montgomery, for their guidance, support, and advice. A big "hurrah" to the members of the Air University library staff for their patience and never ending assistance. To the staff of the Squadron Officer College for their vast information and knowledge of the Air Force and its PME programs. Their personal interviews with me established the framework for this research study. Last, but not least, to my father, Kelly B. Brown, Sr., whose untimely passing on 13 April 2000 has refueled my desires to succeed in all aspects of my life. "Dad, you were always prouder than even me of my accomplishments, I thank you for watching over me as I attempted to better your Air Force."

Abstract

There is a perception amongst senior military leaders that professional military education is a career-long educational process best executed progressively along a continuum of education. The purpose of this research project is to determine the appropriate curriculum to best address the gap currently existing within the Air Force officer Continuum of Education between the Aerospace Basic Course (ABC) and the Squadron Officer School (SOS). The Wing Squadron Officer Course is the title of the newly developed program. Careful analysis led to numerous conclusions and ultimately a curriculum that will bridge the existing gap and enhance each Air Force officer's professional military educational experience. Among the conclusions are (1) Air Force PME instruction could benefit from aspects of its sister services' PME programs; (2) Leadership emphasis is vital to the success or failure of the Wing Squadron Officer Course; (3) The curriculum at the core of the "experimental" CGOC is on-target to meets the needs of young officers and the Air Force, but it has several deficiencies; and (4) Young officers need a "tool kit for success" to gain understanding of concepts vital to the progression of their career. These conclusions lead to the following recommendations: (1) creation of a two-pronged Wing Squadron Officer Course curriculum consisting of—the currently proposed 40-hour long program to teach Core curriculum aspects: Officership, Leadership, The Role of Air Power, Air Force Perspectives, and Tool Kit For Success and a secondary curriculum program, administered on a quarterly basis

educating officers on: new ways of doing business (warfighting); important topics; and issues requiring redress from the Core program; (2) designation of a mechanism to ensure support by wing commanders. Such a means is an attention-getting YES-NO support compliance statement on a wing commander's OPR.

Chapter 1

Introduction

To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.

—George Washington¹

Orientation to Topic

The future of our great nation critically depends on the successful preparedness of the men and women that serve in our armed forces. Well-prepared airmen lie at the heart of Air Force military capability and will continue to be the most important element of the Air Force's success in capitalizing on changes faced in the twenty-first century.² Preparation is gained through a variety of factors both internal and external in nature. Internally, airmen must continue to grow through continual self-reflection of their experiences and study of their profession. Externally, airmen grow through the experiences of others who have blazed the way before them and standardized curriculums to foster embodiment of the ideals of the "Air Force Team." The world environment in which the military operates is marked by one constant—change. Daily we hear reports of new technological advances, new threats, and new operational concepts. To meet the challenges of this dynamic environment, service members must continue to educate themselves and develop from this education. As change is constant, so must the

requirement be for the education of airmen. Such an idea of a life-long approach to education and development of leaders is the basis for the military's Continuum of Officer Professional Military Education. Though applicable DoD-wide, for the scope of my research, I will focus specifically on aspects of the Air Force's Continuum of Officer Professional Military Education.

Statement of the Problem

Despite adoption of the principles of a continuum of education, the Air Force has failed to practice what it preaches.³ Currently a gap exists within the early, yet very critical, stages of the Air Force's officer development through professional military education. The Air Force has acknowledged this gap between the Aerospace Basic Course (ABC) and the Squadron Officer School (SOS for years, however, previous attempts to address the issue have not taken hold for a variety of reasons. The purpose of this research study is to determine the appropriate curriculum that would best "bridge the gap" currently existing in an Air Force officer's Continuum of Education).

The Squadron Officer College (SOC) is the newest organization within Air University and is the parent organization for both ABC and SOS. The college is charged with providing Professional Military Education (PME) across the 1-8 year spectrum of an Air Force officer's career. Currently the Air Force has two programs that provide the foundation of an officer's professional military education. These two programs are the Aerospace Basic Course (ABC), which serves as an initial course for all lieutenants within their 1st year of commissioning, and the Squadron Officer School (SOS) that is attended by Captains with 4-8 years of commissioned service. The Squadron Officer College is also charged with developing a curriculum that will be exported to all Air

Force wings throughout the world to bridge the gap currently existing within the early years of an officer's professional education process. This curriculum will be administered by wing personnel at the officer's initial duty station and is titled the Wing Squadron Officer Course (WSOC).

Method and Procedures

The focus of this study is to provide a recommended curriculum to improve current Air Force Officer PME and bridge the gap to obtain true "continuum" of education. The research method used in this study consists of comparing current DoD intermediate service school's educational programs, a search of the current literature on leadership, and personal interviews to determine the optimum curriculum for the WSOC. The development of leaders and the building of curricula are much-studied topics and vast amounts of information concerning these subjects currently exist. The research method takes advantage of informational databases via the Internet, AU Library, personal interviews of learned parties, and feedback from previously implemented programs. My research concentrates on the development of Air Force company grade officers, however, there is a great deal of value in examining leadership development programs utilized by its sister services: Army, Navy, and the Marines. Each service has a unique view on the manner in which to best educate its officers. Though many commonalities lie within the various service PME programs, an equal number of noteworthy differences are also possessed. Personal interviews serve not only to provide a background and framework to this research topic, but also, and perhaps more importantly, provide a foundation for the missions and objectives of both ABC and SOS. The issue at hand has been addressed at

many times within the history of the Air Force. Feedback from these previously implemented programs will allow for shaping a new curriculum that improves on the past and better provides Air Force officers with the tools for success. With such a foundation or starting point, the goal of my research is to develop a curriculum to assist the Air Force in meeting its mission to “bridge the gap” and better prepare its officers for the challenges of the future.

Notes

¹ Air University. *Continuum of Officer Professional Education: Strategic Guidance*, 1998.

² Ibid., Air University.

³ Col Kodak Horton, Ira. C. Eaker College for Professional Development, briefing to Air University Board of Visitors, 15 Nov 2000.

Chapter 2

Background

Real Professional Military Education is a career long effort

—Bruce Ullman¹

PME Program Missions/Descriptions

Squadron Officer College

An analysis of the basic required fundamentals this study seeks to identify and develop into a curriculum, must begin with a general examination of the Squadron Officer College (SOC). The SOC is the parent organization for both the ABC and SOS, the staff of SOC will originate and distribute the curriculum for the WSOC. The mission of the SOC is:

“To develop twenty-first century airmen who can advocate what aerospace power brings to the fight, value team achievement over individual success, and value their vital role in the profession of arms.”²

The objective of SOC is to provide the officer corps with the building blocks that are essential to the future success of the Air Force. The Squadron Officer College attempts to meet its goal through the provision of curriculum, administration, and mission support to its various PME programs.

Aerospace Basic Course

The Aerospace Basic Course serves as the start point for the curriculum gap that this study seeks to bridge.

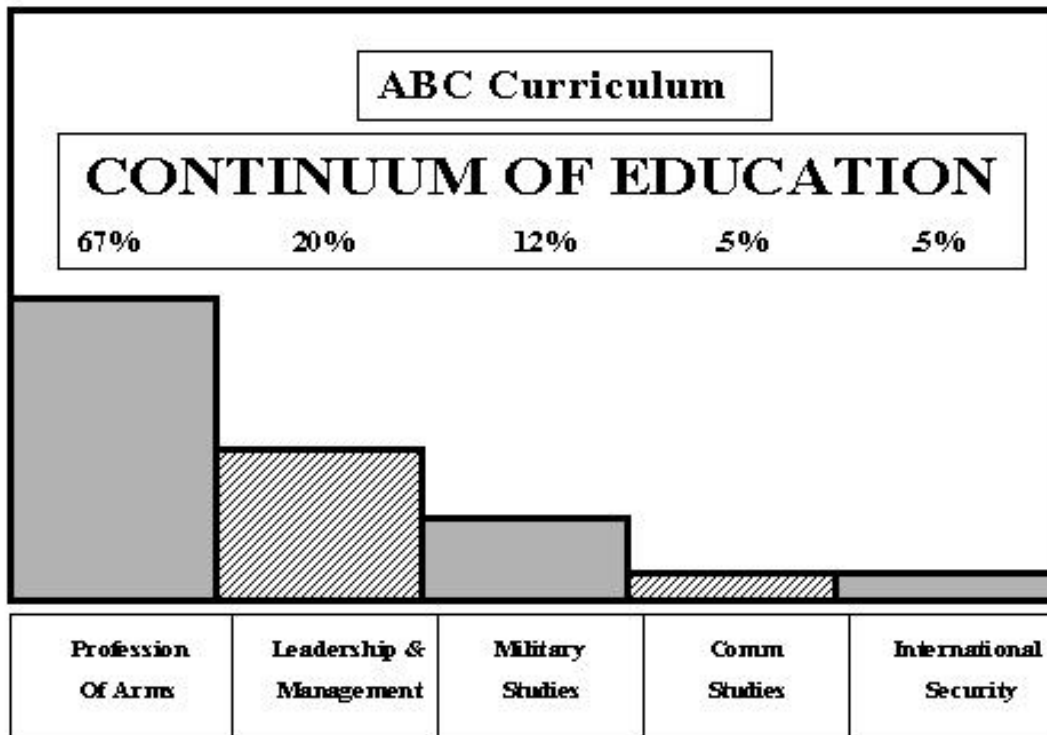


Figure 1. Aerospace Basic Course Curriculum³

A four-week TDY program, ABC is the primary or first level PME for new Air Force officers. In FY 2000, ABC consisted of 5 classes totaling 780 lieutenants and select civilians. The current mission of ABC is as follows:

“To inspire new United States Air Force (USAF) officers to comprehend their roles as airmen; who understand and live by USAF core values, articulate and demonstrate USAF core competencies, and who dedicate themselves as warriors in the world’s most respected aerospace force.”⁴

ABC seeks to instill in its students:

- The value of the importance of personal ownership and commitment to their Air Force and the Profession of Arms
- Comprehension of the unique capabilities of Aerospace Power support towards our nation's National Security Policy.

Squadron Officer School

The Squadron Officer School is currently the second course, after ABC, in the Air Force officer PME system. SOS, a five-week residence course or an 18-month nonresident course, represents the end point for the scope of curriculum development for this study.

In FY 1999, 3089 captains and select civilians attended the resident course. Additionally, over 8100 students were enrolled in the nonresident course. The mission of SOS is to develop dynamic leaders rededicated to the profession of arms.⁵

The objectives of SOS are designed to help officers grow professionally. Students will:

- Value their unique roles as Air Force officers.
- Improve their ability to lead, follow, and build military teams.
- Develop the foundation for critical thinking about aerospace power.

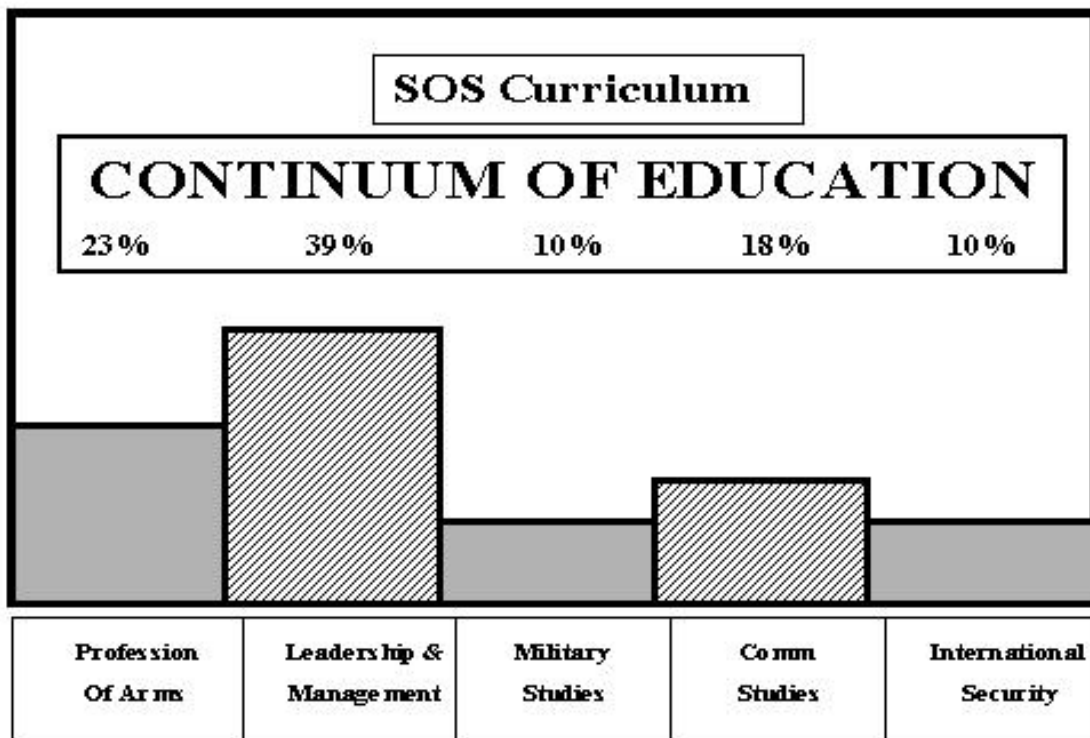


Figure 2. Squadron Officer School Curriculum⁶

Current CGOC Curriculum

The Company Grade Officer Course (CGOC), as briefed in November 1999, is an experimental course from which the Wing Squadron Officer Course (WSOC) has its immediate basis. The two programs share basic premise and conceptual framework.

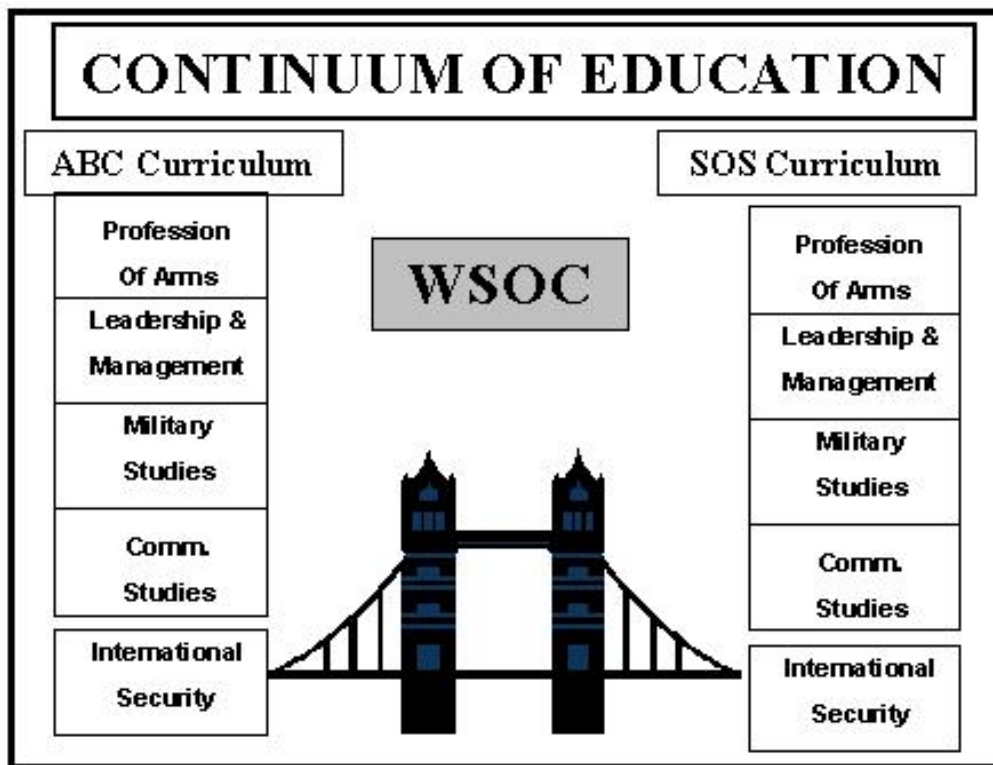


Figure 3. WSOC Rationale—Bridging the Gap

The CGOC is the most recent and advanced approach used to address the needs of educating line, non-line, and direct captains about their roles within an Air Force wing. The CGOC is designed to serve as a bridge between ABC and SOS. The CGOC is a 5-day, 40-hour course administered at the wing level with curriculum developed by the Ira. C. Eaker College for Professional Development (CPD), Maxwell AFB, AL.⁷ The CPD writes, validates, and evaluates the curriculum; the CPD expects the CGOC to have an annual throughput of about 6700 officers.

The rationale behind CGOC centers on the following observations made by senior Air Force personnel forums:⁸

- New officers graduating from a largely academic precommissing environment required a wing-level practical experience to standardize continued officership training.
- The need for a program for company grade officers that is responsive to the challenging needs of today's officers.

The premise of CGOC centers on providing new officers the education they will need in their initial assignments and a better understanding of how they and their organization “fit” into the wing mission. Additionally, the current course provides a broad overview of topics relevant to specific challenges they will face as new leaders and members of a unit. The curriculum is taught by officers assigned to the wing and relies heavily on the support and emphasis of senior leadership at each base to make the course locally available. The current CGOC mission is:

“To provide an instructional program to improve and broaden the professional competence of company grade officers within a wing so they may better perform their duties in support of the Air Force mission and associated mission requirements.”⁹

The goals of CGOC are to: (1) facilitate mentoring at wing level; (2) develop a broad perspective at wing level of current issues and associated tools aimed at enhancing professional competence beyond one's own specialty; (3) understand how operational, logistical, support, and medical elements function at wing level; (4) increase wing cohesion and one's value to the unit by understanding and being able to apply interoperability between units; (5) develop skills necessary to lead, follow, and manage; and lastly (6) continue building on the principle of: “We are all members of the Air Force team.”¹⁰

The CGOC curriculum encompasses five subject areas: Officership, Leadership, The Role of Air Power, Air Force Perspectives, and The Course Director's Option. The

Course Director's Option area allows wing course directors to tailor the course to local requirements. Does this curriculum address the needs of the Air Force at the wing level? Perhaps. A survey of major command Vice Commanders strongly suggests that it will. Feedback from a variety of senior personnel forums (e.g., AU Continuum of Education Groups, AU Board of Visitors, Wing Commander Seminars) assessing the current CGOC curriculum viewed the course as, "an excellent approach to get senior base personnel to further develop our young officers."¹¹

Sister Service Perspectives

Army

The nation's oldest military service, the Army has been developing leaders for over 225 years. The Army officer educational system rests on three fundamental pillars: individual self-development, operational experience, and formal education.¹² Command emphasis is also required to encourage self-development. Units at each level of the Army have formal officer professional development programs in addition to resident PME attendance. The purpose of these programs is multi-fold: mentorship, presentation of breakthrough doctrinal practices, education of little studied topics such as military justice and casualty assistance programs, junior officer communication skills development, and the opportunity to bond in the common bond of officership.

Navy

The nation's second oldest service, the Navy, also has a PME program reinforced by unit-level officer professional development. The specifics of OPD instruction are at the discretion of the captain or commander to address shortcomings, educate, and enhance

esprit de corps. The lasting effects of such OPD instruction within an organization are, as observed by one of its own ranks: “only as good as the emphasis of the skipper who heads it.”¹³

Marines

In the Marine Corps, military education is fostered through empowerment down to the lowest level and continual self-development. It is a responsibility shared by the institution and the individual. Similar to the other services, at each rank, the Marines have a specific list of books to study.¹⁴ They know that it is as much their professional responsibility to read the books on their list as it is to keep their hair cut and boots shined. Demonstrating command emphasis, the Marine Corps Commandant makes this responsibility clear by conducting discussions with the troops in the field about the ideas in the books on their lists. Marine primary-level PME reinforces Service values, develops warfighting skills, enhances leadership and decisionmaking ability, continues developing awareness of joint warfighting, and improves management and communication skills.¹⁵

Leadership Emphasis

Key to the effectiveness and success of any operation is leadership. Organizational leadership is commonly defined as the process of influencing human behavior so as to accomplish the goals prescribed by the organizationally appointed leader.¹⁶ The leader sets the climate within an organization. If the climate is one of indifference, then followers (subordinates) will embody a similar attitude and cultivate apathy. In a climate in which programs are actively nurtured and accepted by leadership, a receptive learning

environment ensues. The role of the wing commander within the WSOC is vital to its success. The educational concepts of the WSOC are designed to facilitate success within the wing for each student. More importantly, the purpose of the WSOC is to build upon the initial military instruction obtained at ABC by continuing a principle of military leadership: a career-long educational process.

How does a leader create such an environment when it does not currently exist? One way this environment can be created is through use of the concepts of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is based on the notion a leader can influence followers to transcend self-interests and commit themselves to excellence. When a leader attempts to influence a follower, four possible outcomes may occur: resistance, compliance, identification, and internalization.¹⁷ Resistance is the refusal or reluctance of a follower towards a leader's request. It occurs when followers actively avoid complying with the attempted influence. This may take subtle forms such as refusing to comply with the organizational policies. Compliance is the acceptance of the leader's influence and a corresponding change in behavior, but not necessarily a change in attitude. It is possible for a leader to accomplish goals and objectives with simply short-term compliance. An effective leader wants to do more than change attitudes—the leader seeks commitment. Identification is the acceptance of influence because the source is an attractive, likable source, worthy of emulation. A change in attitude may occur through identification, because followers want to be more like the leader. However, when the leader departs, the follower may revert back to the original attitudes and behaviors, since a lasting change did not really occur. The final aspect of transformational leadership is internalization. Internalization is the acceptance of influence and consequent attitude

change due to the intrinsically rewarding nature of the influence attempt. Followers take on the ideas or values from a trusted, sound leader because the followers see the wisdom of the influence attempt.¹⁸

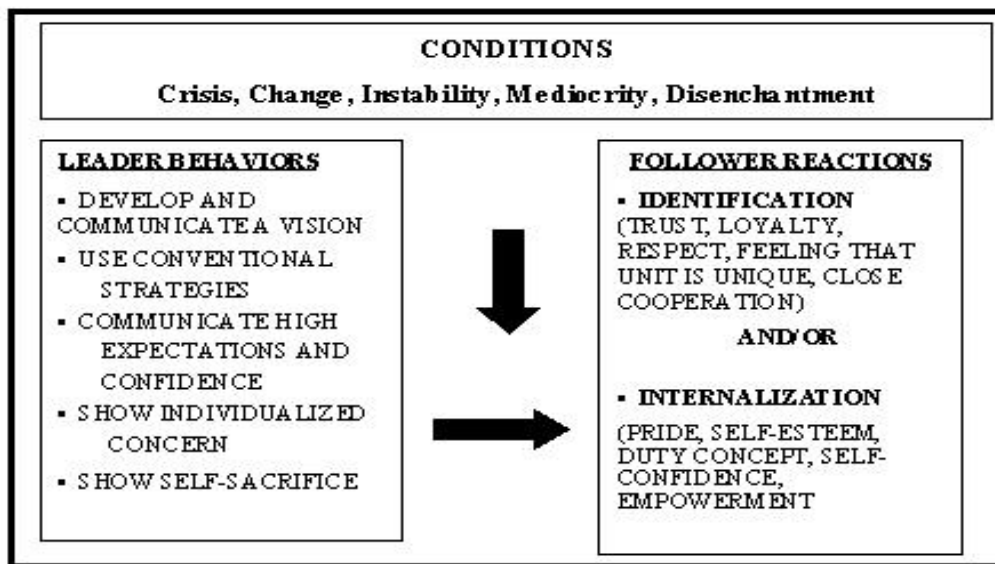


Figure 4. A Model of Transformational Leadership¹⁹

The new attitude is durable and deeply rooted because it becomes “owned” by the follower. Such a sense of ownership within each WSOC student is a paramount goal. The emergence of a transformational leader who personally adopts the concepts sets the stage for success. The leadership of each respective wing commander will make or break the WSOC program.

Bloom’s Cognitive Taxonomy

Ultimately, when lessons learned from experience and PME are applied to real world situations, the greatest learning takes place through self-reflection. The best-developed curriculum is worthless unless there is true learning and understanding of the concepts

taught. A good foundation upon which to develop any curriculum is through the concept of Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy, which describes the levels of learning within the cognitive domain.

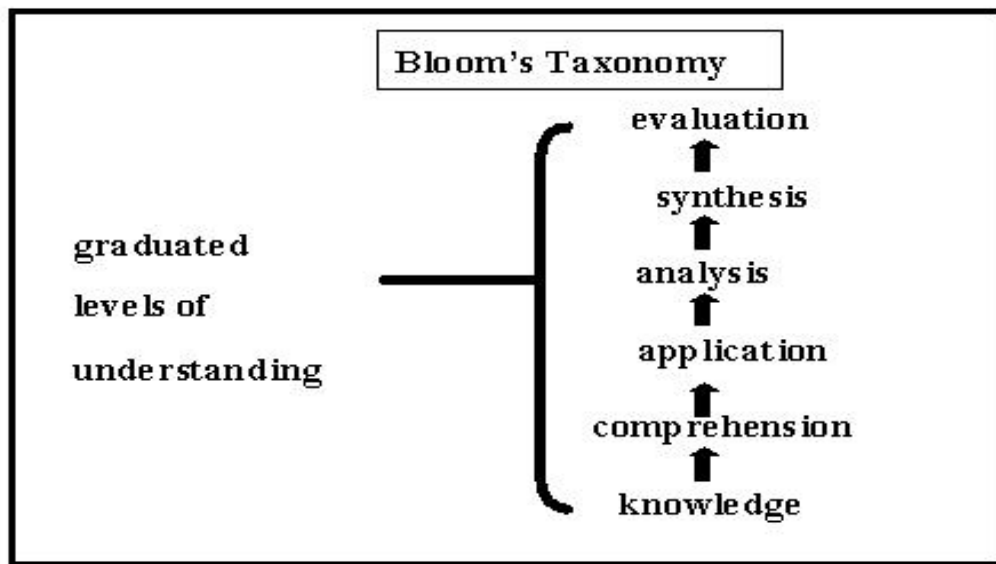


Figure 5. Blooms's Cognitive Taxonomy²⁰

“Very simply, Bloom’s taxonomy shows the progression and mastery of information developed by a learner.”²¹ These levels include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Table 1. Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy

Level of learning (increasing downward)	Definition
Knowledge	Recall previously learned material (facts, theories, etc.) in essentially the same form as taught
Comprehension	See relationships, concepts, and abstractions beyond the simple remembering of material. Typically involves translating, interpreting, and estimating future trends.
Application	Use of learned material in new and concrete situations, including the application of rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories
Analysis	Break down of material into its component parts so that the organizational structure may be understood, including the identification of the parts, analysis of the relationships between parts, and recognition of the organizational principles involved.
Synthesis	Putting parts together to form new patterns or structures, such as a unique communication (a theme or speech), a plan of operations (a research proposal), or a set of abstract relations (schemes for classifying information)
Evaluation	Judging the value of material for a given purpose. Learning in this area is the highest in the cognitive hierarchy because it involves elements of all of the other categories, plus conscious value judgments based on clearly defined criteria.

Source: AFM 36-2236. Guidebook for Air Force Instructors, 15 Sep 94.²²

This study deals with PME curriculum that targets the knowledge, comprehension, and application levels of learning. Traditionally, primary-level PME programs comprise an area of the professional education continuum in which ten weeks of formal education is spread over five to eight years. “Hence the general thrust of curricula should be more affective than cognitive. The short period of time dedicated to formal instruction should be designed to inspire rather than inculcate knowledge in the student.”²³

Notes

¹ Bruce L. Ullman, *Officer Professional Development for Lieutenants*, Airpower Journal, Vol.4, Issue 3, Fall 90.

Notes

² Col Ann Testa, Squadron Officer College, Maxwell AFB, AL, briefing to Air University Board of Visitors, November 2000.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ http://www.au.af.mil/au/digest99_04_professional_training.htm, FY99- *Preparing for the Millennium*.

⁶ Ibid., Col Testa

⁷ Col Kodak Horton, Ira. C. Eaker College for Professional Development, briefing to Air University Board of Visitors, 15 Nov 2000.

⁸ Ibid., Col Kodak Horton.

⁹ Ibid., Col Kodak Horton.

¹⁰ Ibid., Col Kodak Horton.

¹¹ Ibid., Col Kodak Horton.

¹² “Professional Military Education: An Asset For Peace and Progress”, report of the CSIS Study Group on the PME, March 97.

¹³ LCDR Kerwin Lefrere, Air Command & Staff College, Maxwell, AF, personal conversation with source, 2000.

¹⁴ MCO 1553.4A, *Professional Military Education*, 27 Apr 00.

¹⁵ “*Mental Preparation for War*”, *Airpower Journal*, Vol. 7, Issue 3, Fall 93.

¹⁶ Maj Kevin S. Donohue and Leonard Hong, *Military Leadership*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996.

¹⁷ Ibid., *Military Leadership*.

¹⁸ Ibid., *Military Leadership*.

¹⁹ Ibid., *Military Leadership*.

²⁰ Maj Edward O’Neal, “*Educating Company Grade Officers in Military Operations Other Than War*.” Air Command and Staff College, Apr 99.

²¹ Ibid, *Educating Company Grade Officers*.

²² AFM 36-2236. Guidebook for Air Force Instructors, 15 Sep 94.

²³ Air University. *Continuum of Officer Professional Education: Strategic Guidance*, 1998.

Chapter 3

Necessary Tools

A lifestyle of life-long education is a must not an option. An officer must be expected to study, not allowed to.

—Army Professional Development of Officers Study (1985)¹

Professional Military Education (PME)

According to AFI 36-2301, PME is that portion of a military education that:

- 1) Provides the nation with military personnel skilled in the employment of aerospace power in the conduct of war and small-scale contingencies.
- 2) Provides AF personnel with the skills and knowledge to make sound decisions in progressively more demanding leadership positions within the national security environment.
- 3) Develops strategic thinkers and warfighters.²

To meet the above requirements, Air Force officer PME is built around five core curriculum areas: profession of arms, leadership & management, military studies, communication studies, and international security. The study of the Profession of Arms centers on the application of aerospace power capabilities and officership principles—most notably core values and principles of joint operations—to warfighting. Leadership and Management studies concern the development of leadership skills to optimize military effectiveness. Military Studies foster comprehension of aerospace history and

doctrine to modern warfare. Communication Studies analyze communication skills to enhance teamwork. Lastly, International Security Studies addresses the relationship between Geopolitical issues and US Instruments of National Power. Is the instruction encompassing the five core curriculum areas meeting the needs and demands of the Air Force and specifically Air Force company grade officers?

Introspective Thoughts on AF PME

The five curriculum areas comprising Air Force PME support the Chairman of the Joint Staffs' instructional guidance for professional military education, CJSCI 1800.01³. Are these areas relevant and conducive to adequately preparing officers for present and future successes? The results are mixed. The study of the Profession of Arms is to imbue young Air Force officers with the attitude, tools, and knowledge essential for excellence at the unit level. The importance of such study cannot be underscored. Military officers, regardless of the level, must understand basic ideals of the "5Ws and an H" in relation to their service. These self-titled ideals form a thought process to clearly understand one's mission. The process works well and has applicability here. *Who* is doing the action (the Air Force in relation to its sister services and the individual officer within their respective specialty), *what* are they doing (mission), *why* are they (the Air Force and the individual air force officer) doing what they're doing, *when* and *where* may they be asked to fight, and *how* are they going to do it (doctrine). Inherent to officership are the ideas of Leadership & Management Studies. As leaders, military officers must know how to properly lead through setting the example and they must also possess the skills to manage the most vital of resources that the nation has entrusted to them: their people. A wise man once observed, "Those who fail to understand history are doomed

to repeat it.” Throughout the existence of this nation, historical United States military accounts confirm this observation. For example, the United States military failed to learn and evolve from our Korean War experiences to adequately prepare for our conflict in Vietnam.⁴ In contrast, when preparing for Desert Shield/Storm, Vietnam-war veterans Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf used the following philosophy as a foundation for their leadership actions: “there will never be another Vietnam.”⁵ This gaining of a historical perspective to understand the successes of those that have previously blazed the way and the characteristics of airpower illustrate the importance of Military Studies. Communication skills are essential to the success of all officers at all levels. The officer who cannot clearly transmit their ideas through oral and written means fails to generate the greatest effectiveness out of their thoughts and intentions when transmitted to others. Perry M. Smith best captured the importance of communications for leaders, “If a leader is a good writer or speaker, communication, both up and down the organizational structure, will occur in a way that is meaningful, understandable, and has impact.”⁶ An understanding of the international environment is another key to success. The goal of International Studies is to gain an understanding of the impact the international strategic environment has on our nation’s military and security strategies.

The current CGOC curriculum is sound at its general core, but it falls short of meeting the real current and future needs of the Air Force’s company grade officer corps. Its strengths are its common core areas of: Officership, Leadership, The Role of Air Power, and Air Force Perspective. Written feedback by students in field tests were favorable of the instruction provided. However a 40-hour course presented over a multi-year spectrum will have limited benefits. PME is a career-long endeavor, however,

within the current continuum of Air Force PME—with the inclusion of CGOC—this continuance of education to cover the existing gap has not been adequately addressed. At the heart of the CGOC effectiveness is leader emphasis; however, there is no current or proposed mechanism to enforce this leader emphasis. The Air Force has had previous programs to develop its junior officers. In 1979, the Lieutenants’ Professional Development Program (LPDP) was developed.⁷ It was conducted for a period of five years, however, a shortage of personnel resources led to its demise. In 1996, CPD designed the CGOC curriculum plan. After modifications to address concerns within the officer corps, a survey of CONUS bases revealed that the majority had company grade officer programs of various varieties.⁸ The term “various varieties” covers the full spectrum of possible programs from non existent to effective programs characterized by strong leader emphasis and periodic conduct of instruction. The disparity in quality and instruction between different programs demonstrated a requirement for a standardized program executed by subject matter expert (SME) personnel.

Were the curriculums of ABC and SOS correctly addressing the PME needs of the Air Force? As recently as FY2000, the answer was they were not. Through the Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) program, an attempt is being made to develop Air Force officers with skill breadth (generalists) vice today’s parochial Air Force officers with skill depth (specialists). Carl Builder in his critical look at the Air Force entitled, “The Icarus Syndrome,” laments how over identification of individual Air Force specialty code communities (e.g., pilots) could cause the service to lose focus on the big picture as divisive factions pursue narrowly defined, parochial goals.⁹ In addition to the effects of DAL, guidance and advice from the most senior command levels, congressional

committees, board of visitors, and special panels led to major shifts in curricula emphasis.¹⁰ ABC underwent a refinement of its curriculum to keep the cognitive focus of its teachings on aerospace power: doctrine, core competencies, and history. The curriculum for SOS also underwent revision. It logically follows that changes in ABC curriculum would necessitate the revision of SOS as one build upon the other. The new SOS curriculum places less emphasis on leadership & management while increasing the instruction of the other common core curriculum areas—profession of arms, military studies, communication studies, and international security.¹¹ The revision of curriculum demonstrates receptiveness by SOC and Air Force leadership to change in the face of a dynamic environment. The newly designed curriculum, on the surface, appears to better meet the requirements of the field, but still more work is necessary to prepare today's young officers for the challenges of tomorrow.

Tools for the Kit Bag

Many officers use the expression “place it in the ol’ kit bag” to refer to a noteworthy observation or idea to retain in one’s memory for later use. Such a concept applies to the approach towards PME by the sister services of the Air Force. Many beneficial aspects such as leader emphasis and OPD used by its sister services could, in practice, enhance today’s Air Force PME. The argument could be made that such topics are ripe for inclusion into the Course Director’s Option area of CGOC curriculum. However, these concepts are too important to bury within the framework of “optional” and must stand-alone. These aspects: leader emphasis, CGOC, sister services perspective, and a “tool kit for success” are what I’ve chosen to integrate into this recommended Wing Squadron Officer Course Curriculum.

Notes

¹ “Professional Military Education: An Asset For Peace and Progress”, report of the CSIS Study Group on the PME, March 97.

² AFI 36-2301, *Professional Military Education*, 1 Jun 00.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Col David H. Hackworth, *About Face*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

⁵ Colin Powell, *My American Journey*, New York: Random House, Inc., 1995.

⁶ Perry M. Smith, *Rules & Tools for Leaders*, New York: Avery Publishing, 1998.

⁷ Col Kodak Horton, Ira. C. Eaker College for Professional Development, briefing to Air University Board of Visitors, 15 Nov 2000

⁸ Ibid., Col Horton

⁹ Carl A. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome*, Air Command and Staff College, AY 2001.

¹⁰ Col Dennis M. Drew, USAF(ret.), *Educating Air Force Officers: Observations after 20 Years at Air University*, AirPower Journal, Summer 1997.

¹¹ Col Ann Testa, Squadron Officer College, Maxwell AFB, AL, briefing to Air University Board of Visitors, November 2000.

Chapter 4

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations

The status quo is not necessarily the best way to do business. Challenge it!

—MG John G. Meyer, USA (ret.)¹

Summary

Training and education are important and distinct tools used in the development of an effective fighting force. These tools are complementary and closely interwoven at every level of professional development.² The early stages of an Air Force officer's career are weighted more heavily toward training (e.g., pilot training), while education dominates the later stages. Training is the building in of information and procedures; using the progressive repetition of tasks, the product of training is skill development and proficiency. Training is performance-based and is typically measured by objective standards. In contrast, Education is the drawing out of students to initiate the learning process and bring their own interpretations and energies to bear -- the product of which is a creative mind.³

The focus of this research study is education, specifically the gap currently existing within the United States Air Force officer's Continuum of Education. The Air Force is using a curriculum that encompasses the importance of the profession of arms, leadership & management, military studies, communication studies, and international security. Such

a curriculum is the means for overriding success in the future. To liken to sports, the curriculum is a good playbook. However, as the evolution of football playbooks have moved from the “smash mouth” football strategy of yesteryear to the more dynamic, fast-paced “run and shoot” offenses of today, there are ways to enhance today’s Air Force PME curriculum. Through integration of key sister service perspectives, leadership emphasis, current CGOC concepts, and inclusion of a “tool kit for success,” the following recommended concept of WSOC curriculum attempts to make such an evolutionary leap.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research study is to “bridge the gap” between ABC and SOS and enhance an Air Force officer’s educational experience. The Air Force’s sister services have been in the business of educating officer longer and offer aspects beneficial to the professional military development of Air Force officers. I’ve selected one aspect from each of the sister services for inclusion in this recommended WSOC curriculum. From the Army and Navy—continuous conduct of officer professional development (OPD). By definition, a continuum is defined as, “a continuous extent, succession, or whole no part of which can be distinguished from neighboring parts except by arbitrary division.”⁴ Officer professional development must occur on a regular basis at regular intervals to have a true continuity of learning. The inclusion of a single 40-hour course to be administered randomly over a four-year period of an officer’s career will have a diluted effect and not meet the true intent of a continuum of education. Therefore, it is recommended that two parts form the WSOC curriculum: 1) the core curriculum and 2) the secondary curriculum.

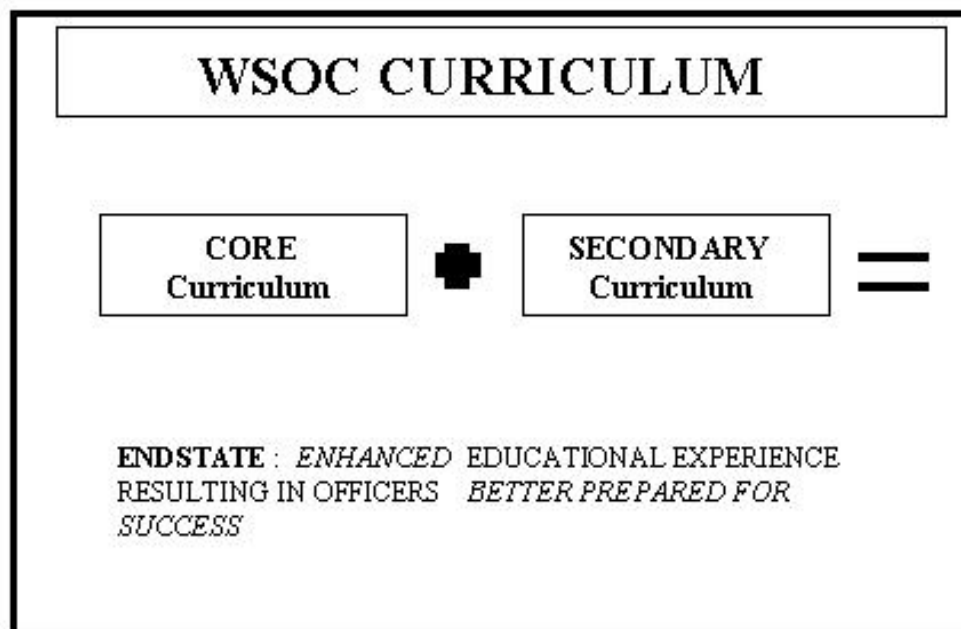


Figure 6. Wing Squadron Officer Course Endstate

Core curriculum aspects are currently taught within the inherent constraints of a 40-hour course, a period believed adequate to address course material and not negatively impact mission accomplishment. Topics covered during this time are broad in nature as evidenced by the CGOC's areas of Officership, Leadership, The Role of Air Power, and Air Force Perspectives. Secondary curriculum instruction occurs on a periodic (quarterly) basis, aspects serve to reinforce critical skills and introduce changes in the basic fundamentals of how the wing and/or Air Force conducts its mission. An argument could be made that a respective wing does not have the time or assets to conduct both a 40-hour week and a quarterly program. However, such limitations can be overcome with a little creativity, acceptance of program importance, and integration of educational

periods into the training schedule. Officer professional development as advanced by the Air Force's Continuum of Profession Military Education program is indeed important not only to the individual airman, but to the organization at-large. Officer professional development does not have a requirement to be formal in nature. Many times the most effective teaching is done without PowerPoint slides and handouts. Simple interaction through discussion and the statement of one's opinion form the best leadership learning tools. For example, one member of the 1997 Center for Strategic and International Studies' Study Group on PME made the following reflection when asked about the instruction of ethics, "Ethics are best caught, not taught. Rather than being told on how what to think, officers need to refine how they think about important ethical issues, wrestling along with their fellow officers with the moral dilemmas presented by real-world leadership experiences."⁵ The lack of resources argument has merit, but a leader can create an environment to rise above such shortcomings. In his authoritative leadership book, *Company Command: The Bottom Line*, MG (ret.) John G. Meyer offers, "If something is important, you'll find the time and resources."⁶ A good leader finds such resources and leads us to the Marine's contribution to this curriculum. From the Marines comes the emphasis of leadership buy in to the WSOC program. It is the ultimate key for success. The Marine Commandant's informal discussion with his officers on books from their reading list is a good example of an important leadership principle: what is held to be important by one's subordinates is what is checked. The current attempt to bridge the gap between ABC and SOS, the CGOC program, does not appear to have wing leadership buy in to the program. Instead of relying on the good nature of its wing commanders to fully support the WSOC program, the Air Force needs to get wing

leadership to buy into the program. The Army in the mid-90s had a similar dilemma: how does the institution create an environment to ensure that subordinates receive the proper mentoring and feedback so critical to their development through performance counseling? The Army chose the following method to illustrate the importance of leaders actively counseling their subordinates: emplace a statement on an officer's evaluation report (OER) where one's rater evaluates the conduct and extent of counseling. Such an idea might also be applicable for inclusion on an Air Force wing commander's OPR to ensure compliance for the greater good of the Air Force. A wing commander who knows that failing to support the WSOC—an institutionally mandated program—may negatively affect their career, may be more inclined to support and strongly emphasize the program.

LEADERSHIP EMPHASIS	
JUNIOR OFFICER DEVELOPMENT- MANDATORY YES OR NO FOR RATERS OF WING COMMANDERS.	
<hr/>	
WERE WING SQUADRON OFFICER COURSE OBJECTIVES MET AND COURSEWORK FOSTERED THROUGH SUPPORT OF WING COMMANDER?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Figure 7. Example Compliance Statement

Despite the integration of the above concepts, there still is a necessity to provide “tools for success” at the primary-level. The tools for success as I envision them are

those mentoring aspects that every officer needs to simply survive and increase chances for success. Tools for success include education in such topics as time management, career timelines, health awareness/improvement, personal visioning, risk management, conflict resolution, decision-making, counseling, alcohol and drug, morality/legality of acts in times of war, and financial management. Very few Company Grade officers are ever told of the great difference a few simple words can make in determining the course of one's career.⁷ Qualitative words to characterize one's performance such as—superb, super, outstanding, good, and fine—denote entirely different levels of performance. The inclusion of a statement such as, “He or she is my number 1 out of 45 company grade officers” is far more defining in shaping one's career than the statement, “among the best.” When a company grade officer is not exposed to such tools, they will continue along their career timelines—as I and many of my ACSC classmates had previously—blind to the knowledge of what it takes to advance and even stay competitive with one's peers in today's military environment.⁸ Our failure to set up our young officer's for success is one of leadership and for us to continue, as is, is to the detriment of the Air Force.

Recommendations

I recommend that the Air Force give strong consideration to the ideas I have advanced through the course of this research study and to adopt the recommended two-pronged Wing Squadron Officer Course curriculum based upon aspects of core and secondary programs.

The core curriculum would consist of the broad natured topics currently covered in the CGOC: Officership, Leadership, The Role of Air Power, and Air Force Perspectives. Added to these subjects would be a fifth area entitled “Tool Kit for Success.”

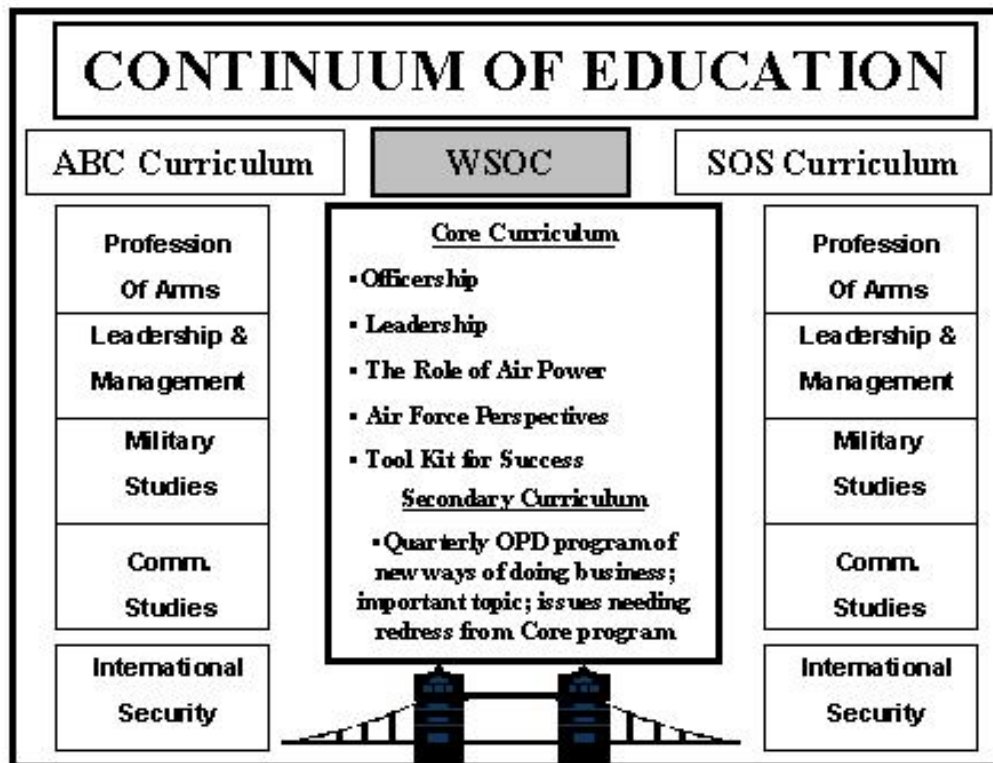


Figure 8. Wing Squadron Officer Course Curriculum

The periodic secondary program would cover aspects designed to reinforce critical skills and introduce changes in the basic fundamentals of how the Wing and/or Air Force conduct their missions.

Table 2 Recommended Wing Squadron Office Course Curriculum

<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Studies Focus</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officership • Leadership • The Role of Air Power • Air Force Perspectives • Tool Kit for Success 	Single 40-hour week
Secondary	OPD program of new ways of doing business; important topics; issues needing redress from Core program	Quarterly

Such a two-pronged approach will address the existing gap within the AF PME continuum and provide Company Grade officers with the “right” tools to ensure their success, not only within the organizational framework of the Wing, but for the future.

Notes

¹ Maj Gen (ret.) John G. Meyer, Jr., Office of the Chief of Army Public Affairs, Pentagon, Washington DC, personal conversation with source, 1998.

² MCO 1553.4A, *Professional Military Education*, 27 Apr 00.

³ Ibid. *Professional Military Education*.

⁴ American Heritage Dictionary: Second College Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1982.

⁵ “Professional Military Education: An Asset For Peace and Progress”, report of the CSIS Study Group on the PME, March 97.

⁶ Maj Gen (ret.) John G. Meyer, Jr., Company Command: The Bottom Line, Byrrd Enterprises, Inc., 1994.

⁷ COL Holland, “OER Tips for Black Officers, presentation to ROCKS-Hawaii, 1996.

⁸ Air Command and Staff College, Seminar 14, AY 00-01, Mix 1, Informal Survey of Seminar Mates, 2000.

Glossary

ABC	Aerospace Basic Course
AU	Air University
CGOC	Company Grade Officer Course
CGOPDC	Company Grade Officer Professional Development Course
CPD	Ira. C. Eaker College for Professional Development
CSIS	Center for Strategic & International Studies
CV	Vice Commander
DAL	Developing Aerospace Leaders
DOD	Department of Defense
OPD	Officer Professional Development
OPMEP	Officer Professional Military Education Policy (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 18000.01)
PME	Professional Military Education
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOC	Squadron Officer College
SOS	Squadron Officer School
TDY	Temporary Duty
USAF	United States Air Force

Definitions

cognitive domain. A major area of learning which deals with acquiring knowledge (as opposed to attitudinal or manual skill knowledge (AFM 36-2236).

core curriculum areas. The five curriculum areas that have been identified as of key importance across the continuum of an airman's career. (Continuum of Officer PME, 1998).

education. The process of imparting a body of knowledge to intellectually prepare individuals to deal with dynamic environments and solve ill-defined problems by using critical thought and reasoned judgment (Continuum of Officer PME, 1998).

doctrine. Presents fundamental principles that guide force employment. Doctrine is authoritative. It provides the distilled insights and wisdom gained from our collective experience with warfare. Doctrine facilitates clear thinking and assists a commander in determining the proper course of action under the circumstances prevailing at the time of decision (Joint Pub 1).

levels of learning. The degree to which a student is expected to internalize (master) a mental subject (cognitive domain), values (affective domain), or ability to perform psychomotor skills (psychomotor domain) (Continuum of Officer PME, 1998).

professional military education (PME). The systematic instruction of professional military personnel in subjects, which will enhance their knowledge of the science and art of war. (Continuum of Officer PME, 1998)

taxonomy of the cognitive domain (Bloom, 1956). A widely used categorization of a major area of learning that deals with acquiring knowledge (as opposed to attitudinal or manual skill knowledge). The levels in this taxonomy are knowledge (students have the ability to recall or recognize material in essentially the same form as it was taught), comprehension (students begin to develop understanding and are able to translate, interpret and extrapolate subject matter under study), application (students are able to use learned material in new and concrete situations), analysis (students are able to break down complex organizational structures into their component parts), synthesis (students are able to put parts together to form new patterns or component parts), and evaluation (students are able to judge the value of material for a given purpose) (Continuum of Officer PME, 1998).

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